IN THE BEGINNING

Toronto - Milk, Hay & Feed Store to left in picture

Published Quarterly By
Woodson County Historical Society
Yates Center, Kansas
Vol. 5 - No. 20

IN THE BEGINNING

Vol. 5 - No. 20 October - 1972

Lester A. Harding - Editor

EDITOR'S NOTES –

As we mentioned in the July issue that the price of this quarterly would go up. Starting the first of January 1973, the yearly subscription will be $2.50. Single copies will be .65 cents each. This seems to be quite an increase, but the cost is considerably higher. We would urge our readers to subscribe by the year as that will be cheaper and easier to handle.

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If a red mark in red is in the box following the Editor's Notes above you will know that your subscription to IN THE BEGINNING has expired.

This issue ends five years of publishing this little historical quarterly, and we have been very much pleased with the response to it.

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The cover picture is a street scene in Toronto, during haying season back a few years ago. You will notice that each of these wagons are of the high wheel make, and each hay rack has wings built out between the wheels. This was a very common sight a few years ago. The Mills Hay and Feed store is to the left in the picture.

None of the men on the hay wagons were identified. We presume that the hay was weighed at the Mills store and perhaps sold there.

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We are in need of pictures of baseball, basketball and football teams from over the county. The pictures would be returned to the owner.

Incidently, if anyone would like their family history or story published in IN THE BEGINNING, please contact the editor. Or for that matter any interesting story of historical value to the county would be appreciated.

IN THE BEGINNING
Published Quarterly By
Woodson County Historical Society
$2.50 per year Yates Center, Kansas 65 cents a copy

WOODSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Organized March, 1965

The July meeting of the Historical Society was the annual picnic supper at the City Reservoir. There were around thirty present.

The Historical Museum held an open house on June 3, and has remained open each day of the week except Monday since that day. There are two volunteers stay each afternoon from 1 till 5 o'clock. The Museum will evidently remain open until the last of October.

New additions are added to the Museum weekly. Five period rooms upstairs have been an added attraction to the Museum.

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There are many interesting articles and exhibits in this Museum. If any of our readers have never visited it you should by all means. We do not believe you will find a much neater and cleaner Museum in the surrounding countryside.

* * * * *

In Memorian

Cleo F. Harding 69 May 25, 1972

Mr. Harding was a native of Woodson County and had farmed in the county most of his life. He had been a member of the Historical Society only a short time.

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Wallace A. Ziegler 91 June, 1972

Mr. Ziegler lived for many years in the southeast corner of the county. Mention of Mr. Ziegler is made in the April, 1972 issue of IN THE BEGINNING.

* * * * *

Clarence Verne Johnson 94 July 8, 1972

Mr. Johnson was the third boy born in the town of Yates Center in December 1877, and lived and had a business around the square for many years. He was a great help to this writer in research down through several years.

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Join and Support the
Woodson County Historical Society

Life Membership $25.00 Membership Dues Regular Membership $2.00

SWAN JOHNSON –

One of the best known and successful furniture and undertaking businesses of his time was operated by a Swedish immigrant, who was known originally as Sven Jonsson, but to the people of Woodson County he was always Swan Johnson. He was born in Norra Sandby, County of Skane, Sweden, September 21, 1846, and six days later was christened in the Luthern Church at that place.

After working at the work of cabinet making, Swan Johnson sailed for the United States. He came to the home of relatives at Galesburg, Illinois. Advertisements in newspapers mentioned a need for workers in Woodson County, Kansas, which was the location that Swan Johnson choose to go into business for himself.

Early in 1879 Swan Johnson arrived in Yates Center, and by May of that year was in possession of a furniture store being successor to J.D. Budd, who had the furniture and undertaking business in the little town that was only about three years old.

The Yates Center News of September 18, 1879 carried this item, – "S. Johnson, Successor to J.D. Budd, Cabinet Maker. Dealer in Furniture and Undertaking Goods. South side of Public Square, Yates Center."

The store of S. Johnson was moved to the north side of the square. However by August 15, Swan Johnson had moved his goods into a new store on the west side of the square.

As Yates Center became the county seat a frame building had been moved from Kalida to the southeast corner of the square and was known for a short time as the Lang House as it had been in Kalida. The proprietors were Mr. and Mrs. Lang. The hotel was then changed to the Central Hotel.

Early in 1880, two young men, one a doctor and the other an undertaker roomed together at this hotel for about three years. The two men were Dr. Henry West and Swan Johnson.

In No. 18 of IN THE BEGINNING, we told the story of Dr. West and of his marriage in 1883. His Swedish roommate also decided to marry in that year.

Mr. and Mrs. Lang, proprietors of the Central Hotel, helped in the arrangements for the wedding of Swan Johnson and Miss Sarah Youse, of Humboldt. The event took place on July 14, 1883, with Rev. J.E. Pickett performing the ceremony, and a large number of guests present.

Also about this same time the Johnsons acquired lots about four blocks north of the square, and Furniture store. Here a new house was built on the corner, that some years later was given the address of 501 State Street.

Swan Johnson — His wife Sarah, and two oldest children, Edie, and Fannie.

* * * * * * * *

Mr. and Mrs. Johnson were the parents of nine children. Three boys: Edie, Frank N. and Harry. Six girls: Fannie, Mabel, Birdie, Esther, Edna, and Dorothy Fay.

Fannie was married to Ross Landis.

Birdie was married to Al Deister.

Esther married Wayne Culley.

Frank married Maude Trueblood.

Dorothy Fay was married to Oliver 'Jack' Roberts.

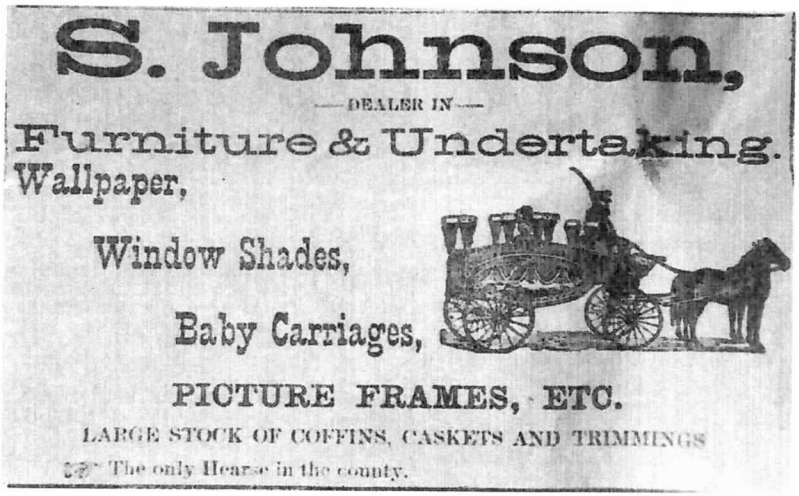
Harry and Edna both died as youth.

Of the large family, Frank N. is the only one still living in Woodson County. He has a son Frank N., Jr. also living in Yates Center.

The Johnson Furniture store did a good business and an older brother, Per or Peter became a partner in the business, and advertisements in the News now read, "Johnson Brothers, Furniture and Undertaking."

Swan Johnson walked the four blocks from his home to the store for 39 years, with never a vacation, except one day a year he would take time for recreation. On this day each spring he would take his family out to Turkey Creek about twelve miles northwest of Yates Center. He made the excuse it was for fishing, but he was never known to fish.

The two black horses used to pull the hearse when necessary, were hitched to a tallyho. Picnic baskets and other things and the large family filled the tallyho. Perhaps one of the main reasons that Mr. Johnson would make this trip was to spend the day with another Swedish family. The John Homquest family.



This was evidently one of the first ads that Swan Johnson put in the Yates Center News in the 1880's. The "Only Hearse in the county" was kept in the warehouse. The long black hearse had four tall plumes at the four outside corners and inside the glassed doors one could see the white satin tuffed sides.

Perhaps financial success was not the main purpose of the small Swedish man as he walked the four blocks back and forth from his home to the store, puffing his corncob pipe, but for the trade that he had learned, Swan Johnson was a master cabinet maker. Many of the caskets in his warehouse were made by him, especially the ones for children.

THE FALLS HOUSE –

One of the first business enterprises in the town of Neosho Falls was the Falls House. It was built in 1858 by Cornelius Ruggles and Peter Stevens.

The first settlements and post office were located on the far or north side of the Neosho River, as was the first mill. The first log cabins were built in 1857. In 1858 Ruggles and Stevens built a log cabin on the south side of the river. There were several cabins there before their cabin. A store was started in this cabin. Sometime that same year Ruggles and Stevens built a frame building and enlarged their store.

The little town seemed to be growing so that same year these two business men built a two story building across the street from their store. This building became the first hotel in Neosho Falls, and was called the Falls House. The Falls House was built near the corner of 5th and Main Streets, almost due west of the dam acorss the river. This hotel stood for many years. Although we never learned just what it was there seemed to be a story of somekind about the horse standing to the left of the picture. It seemed to be a race horse of some renown. The stage coach in center of the picture was no doubt very popular at that time.

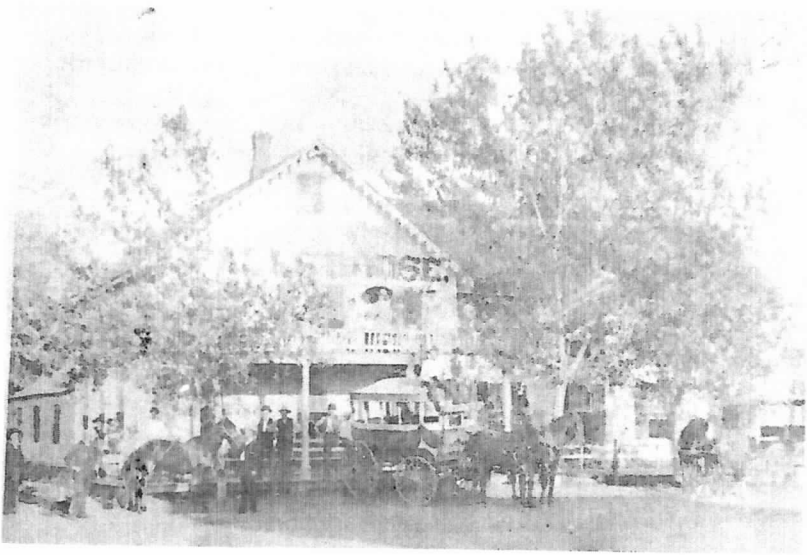
After serving about three and a half years in the Civil War, as First Lieutenant of the company from Neosho Falls, Issac W. Dow took over the management of the Falls House and ran it for around four years. He left the management of the hotel about 1871. At this time there were two other hotels at Neosho Falls.

One was the Pierce House, just two blocks south of the Falls House and the American House, in the south part of town, evidently to catch trade from the railroad. The American House was located about two blocks south of the present water tower on the east side of Main Street.

Another one of the managers of the Falls House was Thos. L. Reid, who was a native of Nova Scotia. He came to Neosho Falls in March 1875 with only 35 cents in his pockets. He worked on a farm for about six months, and had a chance to run the Falls House. He sent for his wife who was still in Nova Scotia. He operated the hotel until 1882, when he went to Iola, but soon came back to the Falls and again operated the Falls House until 1887 when he went to Yates Center and operated the newly built Woodson Hotel.

The Woodson County Republican, published at Neosho Falls–N.A. Burnham Editor – of October 20, 1886, carried this ad; FALLS HOUSE! T.L. Reid, Proprietor. Newly Re-fitted. Good Sample Rooms! Good Accommodations! Board at Reasonable Rates!

"I have a first-class Livery and Feed Stable in connection with the House. I have a good, reliable Double and single rigs for the benefit of



Transients and local trade, that I can turn out on short notice and at as low rates as can be obtained in the city — T.L. Reid, Neosho Falls.

Besides operating the hotel Reid was also Marshall of Neosho Falls from 1876 until 1880.

The man who was operating the Falls House prior to Reid and who gave him a chance to make good there was Harrison Inness, who was a native of the state of Maine. Inness evidently took over the running of the hotel when I.W. Dow quit as manager.

* * * *

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 41

More commonly known as the Peck School, District No. 41 was located in the southwest part of the county. Water from the Toronto Reservoir are to the west and to the north of the school site. It was first organized in March 11, 1876. Whether the school house was on location in the southeast corner of section 19-26-14, where the acre of land was deeded to District 41, in June, 1899, we have not learned, but believe that it was to the west closer to the Verdigris River, where more population was.

The first teacher that we have a record of was in 1881. Lillie Bayless was the teacher and 14 pupils were enrolled. We do not have names of all

of the teachers, but will give names of some. Lillie Boscher, Mary Brown, Addie Hassenpflug, Jennie Green, N.E. Long, Ollie Fleming, A.U. Butler, H.E. Old, Flora Medearis, Charles Jones, Mattie Jones, S.A. Butler, Esther States, Pearl Freeman, V.A. Gleason, Grace Darland, Lois Carter, Elsie Carter, Vera Darland, Merle Huff, Anna M. Williams.

The winter term of 1917-18, was taught by Elsie Carter-Simpson with only four pupils enrolled, and all from one family named Hobbs.

The Peck School of 1911 – Back row left to right: Irvin Deck, Freda Crumrine, Alice Perky, the teacher Elsie Alvis-Daniel, May Colburn, Alva Hayes, Marvin Crumrine, Tom Walden, Roy Deck, John Crumrine, Frank Lampe, the two small girls to the left front are: Erma Walden and Edith Walden.

Several years ago like so many of the rural schools, for lack of pupils the school was disbanded, sold to the Christian Church in Toronto. It was moved to Toronto and annexed to the Christian Church there.

While the school house was not on land belonging to him the school was evidently named for Capt. Wm. Peck, who owned land and lived about a mile to the west, in the Verdigris Valley. Peck was captain of a Negro Company during the Civil War. In 1870, following the war, Capt. Peck came here and purchased this land. With Peck came a colored family named Mitchell. There were twelve children in that family. They settled

along a small stream to the east of where Peck lived. This stream was known locally for many years as Nigger Hollow.

Capt. Peck built a large stone barn against the bluff that stood for many years as a landmark in that vicinity. This barn was built in 1874, and a solid rock ledge formed the north wall. The Curtis Families later moved onto this farm. The site of this barn is now under the water of the Toronto Reservoir.

* * * * *

History of Vernon – Cont.

BUSINESS DISTRICT –

Most of the business places were along Main Street. The store building of J.N. Shannon was the first of these businesses. Down through the years there were from one to three general stores changing hands ever so often. Some of the different merchants in the town besides Shannon were: John Hamilton, D.A. Bowen, Billy and Daisy Howard, Drum Bell, T.F. Anderson, Forrest Randall, Noah and Chester Old, Neil Toedman, Mrs. Anna Ricketts, George New, Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Weide had the last store in Vernon. Forrest Randall once ran a store for Mr. Allen of Yates Center. A Farmers Union store was operated by Forrest Smith and later by Felix Briles before it was sold. The Tannahill brothers Fred and Bert ran a store for awhile.

In 1891, Forrest Randall opened a blacksmith shop at Vernon. He, with V.S. Cantrell, invented, patented and built a motor-driven hay baler that was called the Tucker Hay Press.

The Farmers Advocate, Yates Center, of July 17, 1896 carried these items under the heading of 'Vernon'.

"Vernon can now boast of a meat market."

"J.O. Hamilton will begin the erection at once of a hay barn 40 by40 feet with 20 foot posts."

"Where is our road overseer? The floods of two months ago left our roads impassable and they have remained so ever since."

"Jack Amick is suffering a great deal with his shoulder. The fracture seems to be an obstinate one."

"There will be a meeting of the legion at the old school house on Saturday evening, July 25. S.C. Holcomb, candidate for county attorney, will be present and give us a talk."

* * * * * *

During the early days of Vernon, P.J. Pickering ran a "huckster" wagon for J.N. Shannon. His trip would take him to the northwest from the town and would usually make about a two day trip. He would leave the store with the enclosed wagon full of goods and return with butter, eggs and other barter, besides some cash for his wagon load of goods.

The Woodson Gazette, published in Yates Center of January 24, 1896 carried this item, "The Pickering Brothers have just completed a wagon shop at Vernon".

A two story hotel was built along the south side of Main Street during the early days of the town. It was built and operated by Mr. and Mrs. J.A. West. It was also referred to as the "Beehive". It derived that name from the activities and the many people who gathered or "swarmed" there. Mr. Vest was a veteran of the Civil War and played a fife. It was not unusual for the people on Vernon to be aroused at almost any time of the night as Mr. Vest would review some of his tunes. Meals were served here along with quite a few boarders.

The Tannahill Brothers, Bert and Fred, started the garage in Vernon in a building on the south side of Main Street. In 1902 Earl Thomas and Wendall Baxter took over this garage with Earl as mechanic. The Model T Ford was the main automobile around the town with an occasional Dodge, 490 Chevrolet and other makes.

Vessie Cantrell was agent for the Sampson tractors and quite a few of them were sold around Vernon around 1920.

The Allen Howard that did the lettering on the Shannon building as recorded before was the father of Mrs. W.O. Shaw of Yates Center.

THE FIRST BOY born in the town was a son of Mr. and Mrs. W.H. Harper and was named Vernon Harper.

THE FIRST GIRL born in the town was Jessie Boughton, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. George Boughton.

With the stockyards available along the tracks just to the north of the depot many carloads of cattle and hogs besides the baled hay were shipped out of Vernon. The Verdigris Valley Independence and Western Railroad was changed to the Missouri, Pacific and still goes through Vernon, although the depot is no longer there.

OIL BOOM –

Around 1903-04 an oil boom struck the little town, as oil was discovered nearby. The second oil boom came in 1917-19 when much drilling activity was centered in that vicinity. Petroleum tanks were erected along the railroad right-of-way just north of the stockyards. Oil was shipped by rail at that time. There were several oil drillers and promoters with 18 or 19 rigs drilling at one time around the town.

The story was told that at the height of the oil boom, that a well along the right-of-way just north of Vernon had a certain amount of gas with it and when this gas would be released it would cause quite an oil spout. At that time there were two passenger trains going through Vernon. One from the north stopped there about 1:30 p.m., the other coming from the south about an hour later.

Some ambitious oil promoters would get would-be investers to come in on the train from the north. As the train neared the trick oil well the

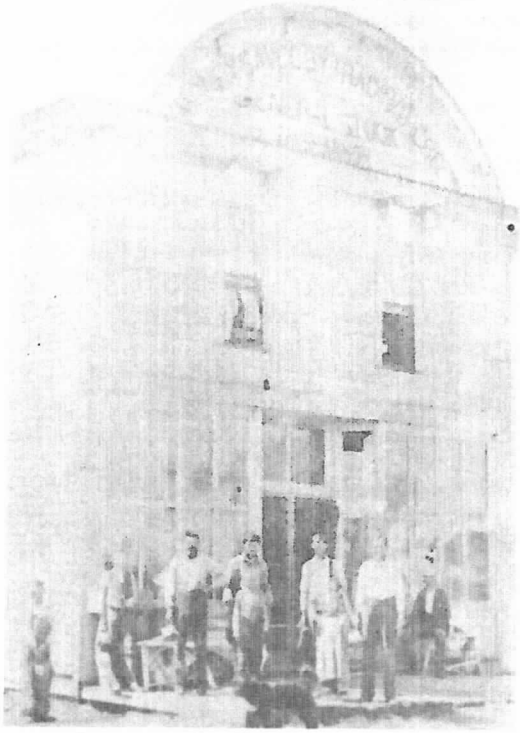
gas would be released, oil would gush up over the machinery as the train passed. This was all the investors wanted to see and was all the promoters wanted them to see, as the gas would not last long. The investors would take the next train north. It is said over $80,000 worth of stock was sold on this one lease.

– Other Businesses –

The second oil boom around 1917-18, brought the founding of the Vernon State Bank by and with A.J. Baxter as president and cashier. The bank did a good business for awhile, but in 1923 was forced to close.

A lumber yard and hardware store was founded next to the bank by Baxter and V.S. Cantrell, with Wendall Baxter as operator.

A privately owned electric plant was founded by the Tannahill brothers Bert and Fred furnished electricity for lights around Vernon from 1910 to 1915. This generator was powered by a six-horse gasoline motor.



This was what was known as the Shannon Building and was perhaps the first store building in Vernon. The lower part was used as a general store, having supplies as would be needed at that time. The upstairs was used as a residence of the Shannon's and later used as a high school room.

Sometime in the 1920's, this old store building burned to the ground. George New was operating the store at that time.

PRAIRIE HAY CENTER –

From the time of its beginning Vernon was known as a prairie hay center and this trade was one of the main sources of income in that area. Every summer just before the haying season would start families by the wagon load would pitch their tents in and around the town, making it almost a tent village.

There were several large hay barns around the little village and during the haying season wagons could be heard rattling along the streets.

While in its hay day the little town had around 100 population, it would increase by about 50 to 75 during the summertime.

In 1924 Vernon became known as the World's Hay Market. One of the best known hay men around Vernon for several years was V.S. (Vessie) Cantrell, who baled bought, and sold hundreds of tons of baled hay from this town. Charles Stockebrand and W.H. Roberts also shipped much hay from Vernon. At times the railroad tracks at Vernon were lined with hay cars. Teams and wagons loading and unloading.

During World War I and early 1920's there would possibly be from three to four thousand tons of prairie hay shipped out in a single season. The hay cars at that time would hold from 300 to 350 bales. This may be a low estimate of the tons shipped out. Cantrell would have eight to ten hay crews going at one time.

Around 1890 J.N. Shannon had several what were known as the Laidlaw half-circle hay presses. These were the fore-runner of the hay balers as they were known in later years.

Several years later, George Tucker a blacksmith at Vernon, and V.S. Cantrell got the idea of a power baler and started working on it. The large fly wheels were made at a foundry at Iola. Several of these hay presses were built at the Tucker blacksmith shop or as it was known for awhile as the Tucker Hay Press building. However the large machinery companies soon came out with power hay balers and the Tucker Hay Press was discontinued and the patent dropped although at one time they were offered quite a sum for their patent. These presses were built around 1910 or 1912. In an article written by V.S. Cantrell a couple of years before his death he mentioned that he used one of these presses for five years and it worked as good as any on the market at that time.

In later years, Wilson "Billie" Shannon moved back to Vernon and was instrumental in breaking out much of the native sod and sowing it to wheat. The Cantrell Brothers still ship quite a large tonnage of baled hay out of Vernon.

FIRST CHURCH SERVICES –

Church and Sunday School was held at the District 20 school house under the heading of Cherry Creek, when this school house was located along Cherry Creek, a half mile west and a mile and half south of Vernon. Sunday School conventions were held in a grove at the (Alexander) Hamilton crossing on Cherry Creek, near the school house.

The Woodson County Post, Neosho Falls of August 2, 1873, gave this notice – "There will be a Sunday School picnic at Hamilton's Crossing on Friday, August 15, open to the county. Our aim is to please the children. Good music will be in attendance and a good time is anticipated. – Henry Ashley, H.S. Zimmerman, committee on invitations."

Another issue of the Post told that the Sunday Schools from Kalida, Plainville, Cherry Creek, Pleasant View and Neosho Falls were present at this picnic. The Neosho Falls band was present. Ministers present were Rev. Cooper and Rev. D.A. Perrin.

After the school house was moved to Vernon, church services were held there for several years.

A meeting was called in the school house in Vernon on September 8, 1894, for those interested in the organization of a Methodist Episcopal Class at Vernon. Action was taken as follows: Rev. L.S. Jones of the Yates Center circuit was made moderator of the meeting.

"The following members were organized into a class to be known as 'The Vernon Methodist Episcopal Church', W.S. Jones, M.E. Jones, O.W. Dutro, Mary Doebert, J.N. Shannon, S.M. Shannon, Myra Shannon, Mary Frame. Trustees elected were as follows: J.W. Grimes, chairman; O.W. Dutro, Secretary; J.N. Shannon, Jesse Thomas and W.S. Jones, duly sworned to perform the duties of trustees of the Vernon M.E. Church, by A. Hamilton, Justice of the Peace."

During the next month plans were made for the erection of a new church. D.S. Park was hired as foreman of all carpenter work with Mr. Shannon as general overseer and timekeeper. The church was erected at a cost of $1680.79.

On Easter Sunday, April 14, 1895, the church was dedicated. Dr. Merlin, President of Baker U., of Baldwin was the dedication speaker. This was followed by a two weeks revival that resulted in 40 conversions, with 37 ascessions to the church.

Just a month and a day after the dedication the church was struck by lightning and burned to the ground. The engineer on train No. 223, saw the fire and gave the alarm, but nothing could be saved.

Plans for the erection of another church were started immediately. The hardware and nails were to be furnished by Shannon's. The nails were to be furnished at 2½ cents a pound.

On September 7, 1895, just one year after the first church class was organized, the second church was dedicated. Rev. J.W. Wright, D.D., preached at the 11 a.m. service. Rev. W. Moore was to preach at 3 p.m. service, but a severe storm prevented, an unusually severe electric storm.

The people of Vernon sheltered and fed the multitude. Mr. and Mrs. Shannon took care of about 50 people. At 9 p.m. Shannon's spacious dining room was converted into an audience chamber and Dr. Wright preached. Everyone stayed all night in Vernon. The Murray house was hit by lightning, shocking several persons severely.

The list of Sunday School Superintendents of the Vernon M.E. Church that we may not have complete nor in order are: J.N. Shannon, W.H. Roberts, D.A. Bowen, Mrs. D.A. Bowen, R.A. Cade, Otis Lynn, Mrs. Blue, Earl Brewer, Harry Sturdivan, Mrs. Anna Ricketts, Andrew Weide, Mrs. J. Wingrave.

* * *

SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 20 –

School District No. 20, commonly known as the Vernon School for many years had its beginning a half mile west and a mile and half south of Vernon on land deeded to that district in 1869 by Alexander Hamilton.

The school board of District 20, in 1871 was made up of S.L. Ellis, A.D. McGinnes and G.W. Shannon, who all gave their address as Cherry Creek. The following year the school board members were D.M. Ray, Alexander Hamilton, S. Grubbs, John Eastwood and Edward Grubbs, all having Cherry Creek as their address. These were all early settlers along Cherry Creek.

The school at that time was known as the Hamilton school and at one time as the Cherry Creek School. Children from up and down Cherry Creek attended this school, but as the prairie land begin to be homesteaded the center of the population shifted to the north and a new school house was built on the prairie about a mile to the north of the old one on land deeded to the district by C.P. Howard. This was in August, 1882.

Three years later the Verdigris Valley, Independence and Western Railroad was built from LeRoy through Vernon and on to Yates Center. The railroad went through just to the south of the school house.

For information concerning these two school houses we consulted with Mrs. W.O. Shaw, who went her first term of school about 1887 in the second school house. Her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Allen Howard lived along Cherry Creek about three-quarter mile to the south and west of the school house. Her mother whose maiden name was Josephine Kennedy had attended the original school District 20. No doubt her twin brother Joseph Kennedy attended the school with her. The second school was a frame building with native lumber made into benches that were used as

seats for the pupils. One of the problems of the school "on the prairie" as Mrs. Shaw referred to was the lack of drinking water for the pupils. After the town of Vernon was started the pupils were allowed two at a time to walk down the railroad track to the town and bring back a pail of water.

One of the teachers, Ed Parker, drove a horse and cart to school. At times the children were allowed to take this outfit after water. One drawback to this was that by the time they got back with horse and cart, much of the water had been splashed out.

Later a barrel was placed in the school house and patrons of the district would take turns filling the barrel with drinking water. In the winter the water would freeze over in the barrel and the ice would have to be broken before they could get a drink.

The last teacher of the old school was J.N. Shannon, who taught there in 1881-82. Pupils living in Vernon would walk down the railroad track to the school. In 1895 a new school house was built in the townsite of Vernon. The old school house was moved into Vernon and was used as a residence and later became a part of a hotel. Around 1900 an additional room was built and a grade school established with Miss Flora Sherman and Miss Maude Lamb as teachers.

When the school was first started at Vernon there were over 60 pupils enrolled.

In 1956 the district voted to annex with District 51 – Yates Center. In the fall of 1856 the pupils from the Vernon District were sent by bus to the Yates Center school. This is now USD No. 366.

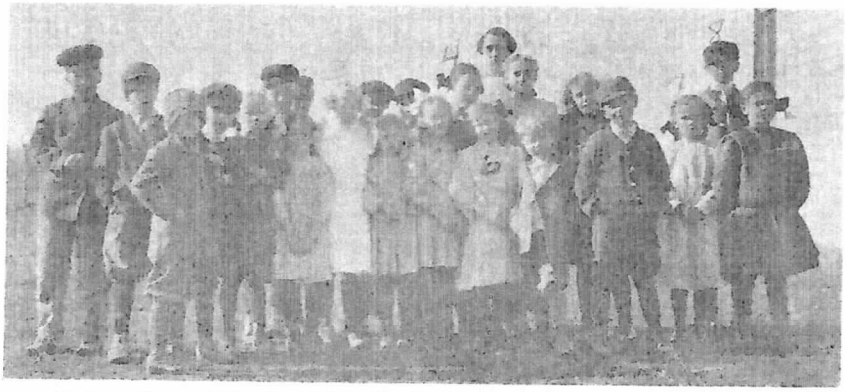
VERNON RURAL HIGH SCHOOL –

The first high school of Vernon was organized around 1917 with the first term being held upstairs in the old Shannon building the winter of 1917-18. The lower part of the building was still being used as a store. There were nine pupils enrolled the first term with a Mr. Rigsby as teacher. He was an Englishman of very small stature and received a very rough time from the boys at that time. This was in the time of World War I, and Rigsby enlisted in the US Army before the term was out.

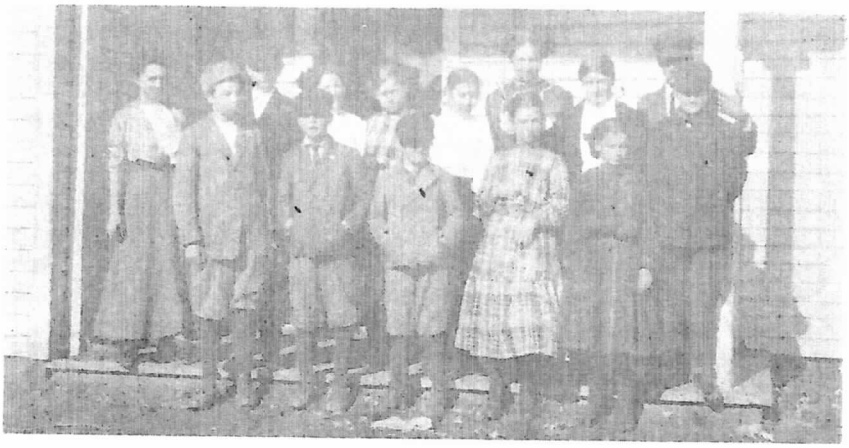
A rural high school was organized and a new two-story brick building was built around 1925. High school was held here until about 1945 when for lack of pupils the school was discontinued and the pupils sent to other high schools. At one time there were 33 pupils enrolled with three teachers at this school.

The first graduate of the Vernon High School was Anna Bratt, but with no graduation exercises being held. The following year, 1921 the lone graduate was Lillian Pickering, (Mrs. Earl Thomas). Graduating exercises were held in the upstairs of the old Shannon building where the school was held. Tom McNeal of Topeka was the commencement speaker.

The pictures below are of the Vernon School when a two teacher school, taken December 23, 1911. The top picture is of the lower grades and the other is the upper grades.



It is rather difficult which is the front or back rows so we will take them from left to right. They are not all identified. On left is Joe Roberts, Charles Bowen, Harlan Roberts, ?, Lillian Pickering, girl with striped dress is Iris Bowen, next four boys in back not identified. 3 is Evelyn Roberts, 4-Margaret Jagger, 5-Lola Almond, 6-Lena Almond, 7-Goldie Maple, 8-Dorsey Henderson, the girl on the end is Helen Jagger. The teacher in the back is Bertie Johnson.



The teacher to the left is Ina Watts (Mrs. Robert Rhea). Front row: Roscoe Porter, ?, Floyd Pickering, Bessie Pickering, Lillie Maple, Walter Pickering. Back row: Estes Vest, Rhoda Maple, Alma Keske, Maude Pickering, Goldie Almond, May Pickering. Boy on end not identified.

We cannot list all of the teachers at Vernon, but will mention some of the later ones. Elizabeth Garvey, Bertha Henderson, Sophia Kesterson, Florence Toedman, Iris Wilson, Lucille Manifold, Myrtle Ruth, Dorothy Faye Johnson, Marian Gregerson, Delyte Fry, Marjorie Tannahill, Pauline Lynn, Mae Turner, Wilma Scott, Nora Shepard, Marjorie McCormick, who was the last teacher in 1955-56.

Some of the rural high school teachers were: Edith Gould, Bernice Morrison, Ira Stiles, Hortense Slavens, E.L. Combs, Mrs. E.L. Combs, J.G. Wilson, Mrs. J.G. Wilson, Dave Massey, Eva Crumrine, Betty Shewell, Mrs. Louise Roberts, Joe McCall, Mary McCall. The last term of school was in 1945.

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This is no means a complete history of Vernon, but we will do more about the people living there and various happenings in following issues of this quarterly.

HORSE POWERED THRESHING MACHINES

In the days of the horse-powered threshing machines the wheat would be cut with a binder and shocked. Then after it had gone through the "sweat" it would be hauled and stacked in a convenient place. Later the threshing machine would come into a community and a threshing crew would gather.

The machine was powered by 12 or 16 horses depending on the size of the machine. A platform about six or eight feet square was built over the power with a man sitting or standing with a long whip to keep the several teams of horses pulling their swings evenly as they went around and around.

A turn-buckle ran from the power sweep to the machine or separator. This turn-buckle was jointed every several apart. As the horses went around with the power-sweep, the turn-buckle would run the threshing separator on the same principle a long belt did on later machines.

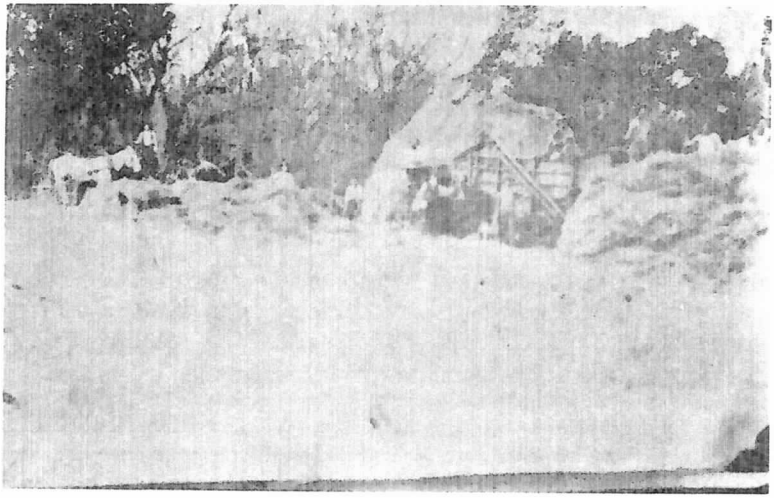
On the "hopper" end of the separator a divided platform was built with a man standing on the divided part. A boy or small man stood on the platform with a sharp knife and would cut the strings on the bundles as they were thrown onto the platform. The man standing in the divided part would feed the machine by sweeping the bundles into the hopper. The bundles had to be all loosened before entering into the machine to keep from 'slugging' it, as the power was not to steady. Quite a lot depended on the man with the horses to keep each team pulling even.

Not only wheat, but oats, barley, rye and sometimes flax would be stacked and threshed in this manner.

From one to two men were required on each stack to keep the bundles flowing evenly into the machine. The stacks were placed in double rows so that the machine would be between two stacks. As the straw would come from the separator onto slat carriers and onto a stack one man or more was required to trample and stack the straw. Around ten men were required to make up a crew for these horse-powered threshing machines.

The man sweeping the bundles into the machine had the most dangerous job as most of the time he would push them into the hopper with his hands. The man cutting the twine on the bundles with a corn knife had to keep up a steady rhythm with his knife so as not to miss a bundle. There were times when the feeder could not get his hand away in time that would result in a cut hand or fingers.

There were probably several of these horse-powered machines over the county. Around 1900, Asa Miller and Grant Stines purchased one and did considerably lot of threshing up and down Turkey Creek.



This picture of an old horse power threshing machine was evidently taken somewhere around the Burt vicinity, as the white bearded man in the right center of the picture by the separator is believed to be Asa Whitney. We believe that the man to the left of Whitney with his hand on a dog is the writers father, George Harding.

This machine may have belonged to Nick Swartzentrouper who ran one of these machines. He lived somewhere to the east of Burt.

THE SPADE RANCH –

While it was not known by this name when first started this ranch was first began in the latter part of the 1870's. Bernard Paul (Pronounced Powell), who was the leader of the German-Russian Menonite colony who settled in the Nikkeltown area purchased land on both sides of Duck Creek a couple miles north of the Nikkeltown corner.

The main headquarters and buildings were located on a hill just to the south of the creek with four other sets of buildings that were occupied by farmers. The headquarter buildings consisted of an eight room house, a large horse barn and other buildings. On the east slope of the hill between the house and road Paul built a large bank barn for cattle and sheep. The basement or bank part was made of native sandstone about eight feet high, with lime mortar holding it together. The second story was built of native lumber with a good floor.

It was built on the order of the old sheep barn on Turkey Creek built by the Weides and burned down several years ago. The basement part was for the livestock and the upper part for winter feed and hay. The building was about 150 feet long and 30 feet high, and one of the best stock barns in the county.

At the northeast corner of the barn a good well was dug. Jeff Gillette a well known well digger from north of Burt dug the well that produced plenty of water for the livestock. A large wooden windmill was placed at the well with a large wooden tank being built to hold the water.

Sometime in 1883, during a storm the large wooden mill wheel was damaged. Paul hired one of the Nikkels, John Sturdivan and John Klingenburg to repair it. The wheel was taken down, repaired and hauled back to the tower. As they were getting the wheel in position, in some manner the wheel hit John Klingenburg and pushed him off the tower. He fell across the wooden tank causing his death. He was buried in the little cemetery by the school house.

Mr. Klingenburg and his wife Elizabeth and three small sons: Edward, John and Gus, had just came to America from southern Russia the preceding year. Mrs. Klingenburg and sons lived in that vicinity until the following year when she became the wife of John Light of Turkey Creek. She became the mother of Amil and Fred Light.

Bernard Paul sold his ranch to a Mr. Pyette who kept it only a short time and sold it to J.D. Payne and son Donald from Texas. Payne was a cattleman and the ranch soon became known as the Spade Ranch, from the design of the brand that Payne used. Coming from Texas with the Paynes' were the Negro family Steve and Gertie Carr, two children, Dimmick and Gertrude Carr, and Carr's half brother Jack Oliver, and a younger brother who died soon after arriving here.

The Carr's lived a mile east of the ranch headquarters for awhile and then moved to a small shack on the prairie a half mile north of the Askren Cemetery. This place where they lived became known as the Nigger Die or Niggerdive Pasture. This is a story in itself we will tell later.

Payne sold the ranch to another rancher from Tennessee named Perkins. Perkins soon sold it to Garnett from Kentucky. As the Garnett Ranch it became known for its good horses and hunting dogs. Garnett kept around 100 horses.

The ranch changed a couple of times more before it was divided up into several smaller farms. Not a trace can be found of the barn except the well and no other buildings are there. The place has been vacant for years.

PATRONS OF THE WOODSON COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

John V. Glades Agency
Woodson Co. Coop
State Exchange Bank
Street Abstract Co., Inc.
Schornick Oil Co.
Self Service Grocery
Krueger's Variety
Walter A. Bowers
Hi-Way Food Basket
Farmer's Coop Piqua
Gualding Oil Co.
Harry O. Ashley
Swope & Son Impl. Co.
Campbell Plumbing & Electric
Clyde Hill
Cantrell Buick-Pontiac
Paul C. Laidlaw
Rogers Brothers Garage
Charles H. Carpenter
Newtex Manufacturing Co.
J.C. Schnell
Wood-Perkins Dept. Store
Smith Furniture & Funeral Home
Superior Building Supply, Inc.
Marie Beine
Ted West
Kimbell Ranch—Ed Kimbell
Pringle Ranch-J.W. & J. Richard

Al's Jewelry
First National Bank—Toronto
Blackjack Cattle Co.
Yates Center Elevator Co.
Jasper's Shopping Spot
Bill Taylor-Gen. Agent
Woodson Co. Farm Bureau
Atkin Clinic
Daly Western Supply
Pyeatte-Jaynes Ins. Agency
Dyer Chevrolet Co.
Linde Barber Shop
House of Fabrics
Brown's Western Auto
Donald E. Ward
Wilma Mark
Milton Wrampe
Gambles Friendly Store
E.E. Light
Yates Center News
Everybodys Grocery
Baker Rexall Drug Store
Yates Center Skelgas Service
Campbell Furniture & Undertaking
Piqua State Bank
Don & Neva's Tastee-Freez
Security Oil Co.
L. & S. Meat Market

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